



8:06 p.m.: 19 inmates graduate from fatherhood program

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PENDLETON — For many Indiana prison inmates, the possibility of someday being reunited with their children is one of the few things giving them hope while they serve time behind bars.

“Our children is all we have sometimes,” said John T. Young, 27, an inmate at the Correctional Industrial Facility in Pendleton. “We lose our wives; our parents die. The main focus for many of us is our children.”

Young was one of 19 inmates who graduated from the Inside/Out Dad program during a short ceremony Wednesday. The program, developed by Gaithersburg, Md.-based National Fatherhood Initiative, deals with improving parenting skills and how inmates can improve their relationships with their children.

“Involvement with your children for today and forever is what it’s all about,” said Tom Hanlon, the prison’s superintendent. “There is so little that is taught to us about raising children.”

Inmates at the medium security facility met for two hours once a week for 12 weeks. The 19 men at the Correctional Industrial Facility represented the program’s first graduating class at the prison, and each received a certificate of completion.

According to J. David Donahue, the Indiana Department of Correction’s commissioner, the program is being used at every facility housing adult male offenders. Another 142 inmates have signed up for the next series of classes at the Correctional Industrial Facility. The prison, built in 1985, houses roughly 1,400 men.

Young, who has a 6-year-old daughter, had high praise for the program.

“It’s been a really good 12 weeks,” said Young, who is scheduled to be released in 2009 after being sentenced in 2003 in Grant County on several felony drug charges. “It’s another sign that people care.”

For Thomas Murry, father of three and stepfather of three more, the program, with its emphasis on promoting responsible fatherhood, encompassed more than just parenting tips.

“This not only taught me how to value my kids, but build a foundation of social skills,” said MurrySMcGrath 3/21/07 name is cq, who is scheduled to be released in 2013 after being convicted of firearm and drug possession charges in Marion County in 2004.

“We all learn from somebody. We all want better things in life.”

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Photos



Correctional Industrial Facility Superintendent Tom Hanlon addresses the 19 offenders who are the first group to graduate from the Inside Out Dad's curriculum offered at the facility. The Herald Bulletin



Graduate Michael Ford receives his Certificate of Completion during ceremonies at the facility Wednesday morning. The Herald Bulletin



One of the graduates, Michael Ford, listens as Superintendent Tom Hanlon give the keynote address to the group. The Herald Bulletin



One of the graduates, John T. Young, addresses the group and tells them what this program has meant to him and how it has helped him become a better person and father. The Herald Bulletin